

# Can I Still Have a Green Funeral or Burial If I Prepaid For My Arrangements?

*The good news is, even if you have prepaid for funeral arrangements it is still possible to incorporate green elements into your funeral.*

John A. Gentleman Mortuaries and Crematory in Omaha, NE

These days many people prepay for funeral arrangements. It is a thoughtful thing to do for surviving family members because it takes much of the planning and financial burden off them in their time of grief.

However, you may wonder what happens if you change your mind about your arrangement plans? Green burial options did not really become popular until the last few years, so if you preplanned your funeral it is likely you were not given a green burial option.

The good news is, even if you have prepaid for funeral arrangements it is still possible to incorporate green elements into your funeral.



## **Embalming**

Embalming is one area where it is easy to go green. Embalming is not required by law. And funeral homes are required to tell you this. You can contact your funeral home of choice and let them know your decision is not to embalm. They will likely require you to sign a paper stating you understand your choice. It is important to know that the funeral home will, most likely, not be able to accommodate a public viewing if embalming is declined. But there can still be visitation hours with the family.

## **Burial Casket or Urn**

If you prepaid for a casket or urn, you may still be able to make a switch to a different type of material. If you wish for a green burial, use of a biodegradable casket or urn is a good choice. Many funeral homes are starting to offer biodegradable options. If they don't you can order one from a third-party vendor and have it shipped to the funeral home of your choice. However, you may want to consider the extra cost of getting another casket and talk to the funeral home about charges for changes.

## **Burial Plot**

Changing your burial plot is much more difficult. If you decide you want to be buried somewhere, but you have already purchased a burial plot you have several options. One is to simply purchase a burial plot in a green cemetery. However, this can be expensive.

You can also try to sell your original burial plot to help finance the cost of a new plot. A cemetery may be willing to buy back a burial plot (though it will likely be at a lesser cost than what you originally paid). It is also possible to resell burial plots, though you need to check to make sure of any needed documents and fees to transfer the plot to someone else.

Many cemeteries are now changing to hybrid green cemeteries. This means that they are incorporating a green burial area into their regular cemetery grounds. If this is the case, you can contact your cemetery and ask about switching to a green burial area. There may be some fees associated with the switch, however. And it is likely the new green plot will cost more as there is typically a smaller supply of green plots available.